Community Strength

Valued Conditions Expressed by King County Residents

- *Everyone feels included; no one is isolated. Neighbors know each other's names and get together often. A lot of talk between neighbors.*

- *People show respect for and interest in others who are of different ages, educational, social and ethnic backgrounds.*

- *Neighbors depend on each other: borrowing and lending, watching out for each other's children, homes, gardens, and pets. There is trust.*

- *People organize within the community/neighborhood: block watches, neighborhood directories and associations.*

- *People invest in the community: keeping it clean, organizing mentoring and other youth development activities, supporting public parks, libraries, community centers.*

- *People are informed and engaged in their community: volunteering, staying aware and well-informed of community issues, planning and attending community events.*

- *People are active participants in community events and the political process. They believe that what they do can make a difference in community life.*

- *Organizations and individuals provide financial support for the arts: music and arts programs in schools, public art in communities.*

- *People enjoy artwork and music: buy recordings and artwork of local musicians and artists and purchase books from locally-owned bookstores.*

- *People honor and show interest in the cultural/religious heritage of others.*

- *People share their common heritage and interests: language, religious observance or cultural practice. They have opportunities to gather with people who are like them.*

- *People of different generations frequently interact and do things together.*

- *Immigrants receive assistance to improve their knowledge of English. Immigrants are empowered in other ways—training, involvement in community organizations, etc.*

- *The impact of development and environmental degradation is not disproportionately felt by poor communities (the siting of and regulations for airports, freeways, landfills, toxic waste dumps, etc., is carried out so that health and economic impacts are not disproportionately felt by poor communities).*

- *Communities retain natural surroundings.*

- *There are many public places, well-maintained, for recreational use.*

- *People walk, bicycle or bus in order to obtain most of their daily needs.*

- *People trust in the police and courts to give fair treatment. Justice is delivered regardless of race/ethnicity, income, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation.*

- *There is diversity in neighborhoods: elderly and single people living among families, single family dwellings among multi-family dwellings; shops among residences, low cost housing among higher cost housing.*
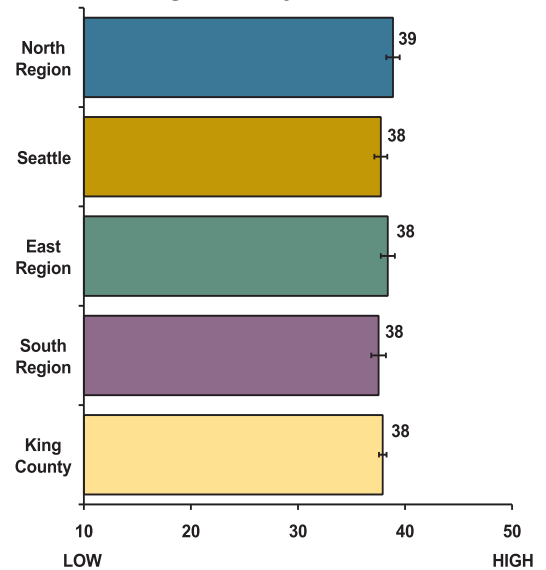
The valued conditions came from citizen opinion expressed as values and concerns in the telephone survey, focus groups, and in the civic and public forums. The valued conditions are expressed as "ideal" conditions—based on the vision of what residents want for themselves, their families and communities.

Neighborhood Social Cohesion

Social cohesion refers to mutual trust among neighbors combined with willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good. There is evidence that rates of violence are lower in neighborhoods with higher social cohesion.

- Social cohesion was measured by asking King County adults in a survey 5 questions about levels of trust in their neighborhood and 5 questions about the likelihood that their neighbors could be counted on to intervene in various problem situations. Answers to these 10 questions were added to create a social cohesion scale with a possible score between 10 (Low) and 50 (High).

- The average (mean) social cohesion score for adults in King County was 38. There were no significant differences in average social cohesion level by region.

Average Level of Neighborhood Social Cohesion King County, 1999

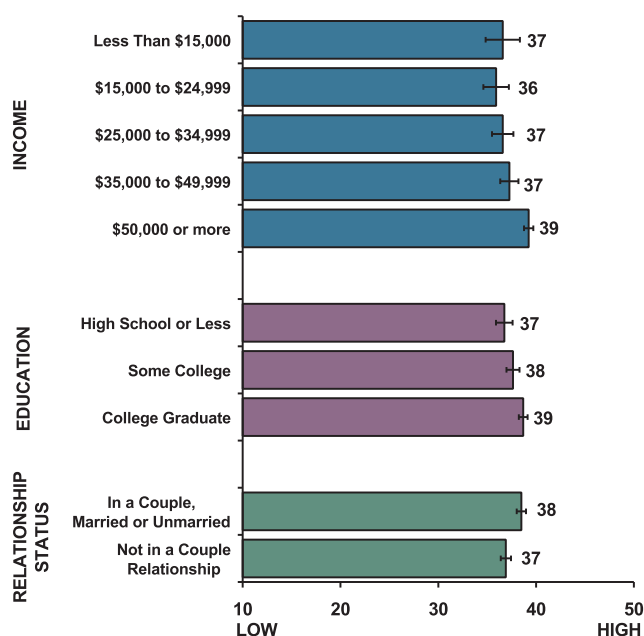| Region	Score
North Region	39
Seattle	38
East Region	38
South Region	38
King County	38

(Scale: 10 LOW — 50 HIGH)

Percent of Adults Who See High Social Cohesion (Trust and Control) In Their Neighborhoods, King County, 1999

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Percent Answering Strongly Agree or Agree				
	North Region	Seattle	East Region	South Region	King County
…This is a close-knit neighborhood.	53%	54%	55%	55%	55%
…People in this neighborhood can be trusted.	85%	78%	77%	81%	79%
…People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	84%	83%	82%	79%	81%
…People in this neighborhood do not share the same values (reversed for scale).	18%	24%	16%	20%	20%
…People in this neighborhood generally don't get along with each other (reversed for scale).	5%	5%	6%	8%	6%

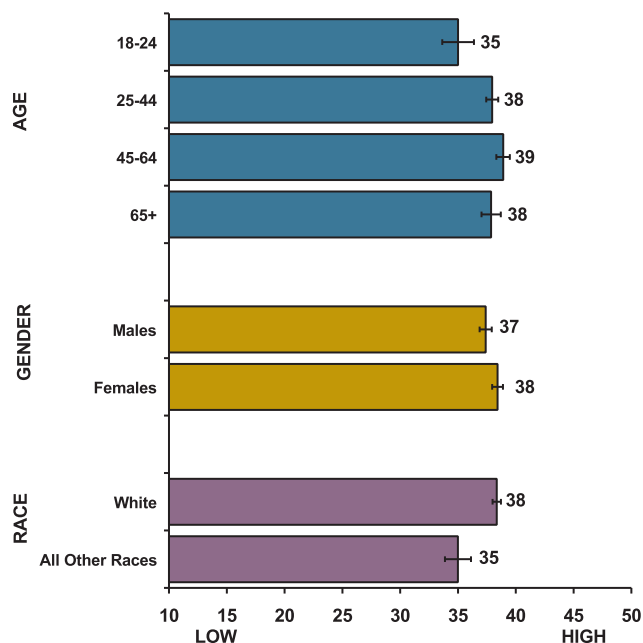| Would you say it is very likely, likely, unlikely, or very unlikely that your neighbors could be counted on to intervene or do something if:	Percent Answering Very Likely or Likely				
	North Region	Seattle	East Region	South Region	King County
…children were skipping school and hanging out in the neighborhood?	65%	55%	65%	63%	61%
…children were spray-painting graffiti on something in the neighborhood?	89%	83%	89%	84%	85%
…children were showing disrespect to an adult?	66%	55%	62%	60%	59%
…a fight broke out in front of their house?	86%	79%	83%	83%	81%
…the fire station closest to their home was threatened with budget cuts?	65%	67%	65%	60%	64%

Average Level of Neighborhood Social Cohesion By Income, Education, and Relationship Status King County, 1999

INCOME

Less Than $15,000	37
$15,000 to $24,999	36
$25,000 to $34,999	37
$35,000 to $49,999	37
$50,000 or more	39

EDUCATION

High School or Less	37
Some College	38
College Graduate	39

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

In a Couple, Married or Unmarried	38
Not in a Couple Relationship	37

10 LOW — 20 — 30 — 40 — 50 HIGH

- People with incomes of $50,000 or higher report higher levels of social cohesion in their neighborhoods.
- People who have completed college report higher levels of cohesion than others with less education.
- People who have a couple relationship (either married or unmarried) see higher social cohesion than those who are separated, divorced, widowed or never married.

Average Level of Neighborhood Social Cohesion By Age, Gender, and Race King County, 1999

AGE

18-24	35
25-44	38
45-64	39
65+	38

GENDER

Males	37
Females	38

RACE

White	38
All Other Races	35

10 — 15 LOW — 20 — 25 — 30 — 35 — 40 — 45 — 50 HIGH

- People who are in the youngest age group (18-24 years), see less social cohesion in their neighborhoods than older residents.
- People who are white see more neighborhood social cohesion than people of other races. It is important to note that this measure is based on neighborhood level perceptions of cohesion and not cohesion within cultural or ethnic groups.

Data Source, Definition, and Limitations

The neighborhood social cohesion measures are from the King County Community Health Survey, 1999, which used questions on trust and informal social control from the study, "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy" (Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton).

All of the differences presented in text are statistically significant at 95% confidence interval.

The limitations of an English-only telephone survey include the following: a) people who do not have a telephone are missed, b) people who do not speak English do not participate, c) people who have less education and lower incomes tend to be underrepresented.

Involvement In Community Organizations

Communities are strong when many people are engaged in activities that benefit more than themselves as individuals. Working together for the common good of neighborhoods, faith communities, schools or a political cause creates civic responsibility and a sense of reciprocity.

- Involvement in Community Organizations was measured by asking King County adults how actively they had participated in 4 different types of activities in the past 12 months. The number of these activities was added for each respondent.

- In King County 70% of adults were "very active" or "somewhat active" in at least one activity.

- There was no significant difference in involvement levels by region of the County.

- Looking below at the 4 types of organizations, approximately 25% of King County adults were very active or somewhat active in a neighborhood organization and in a parent-teacher organization. Approximately 40% were very active or somewhat active in a religious or spiritual group and in a political, civic, arts, or youth development organization (see table below).
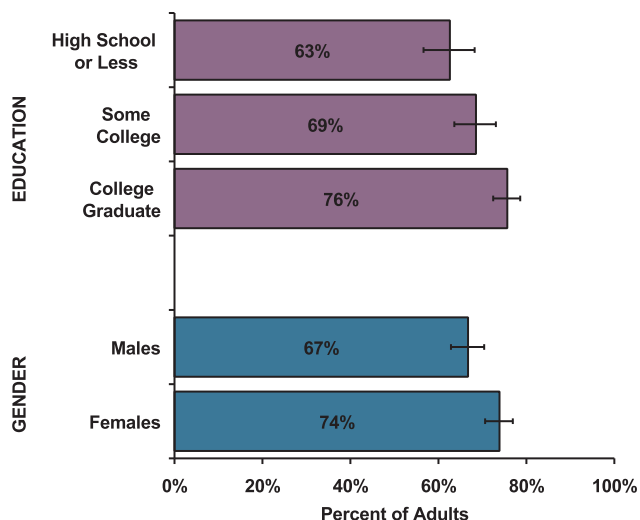
**Percent of Adults
Who are "Very or Somewhat" Active
in One or More Community
Organizations
King County, 1999**
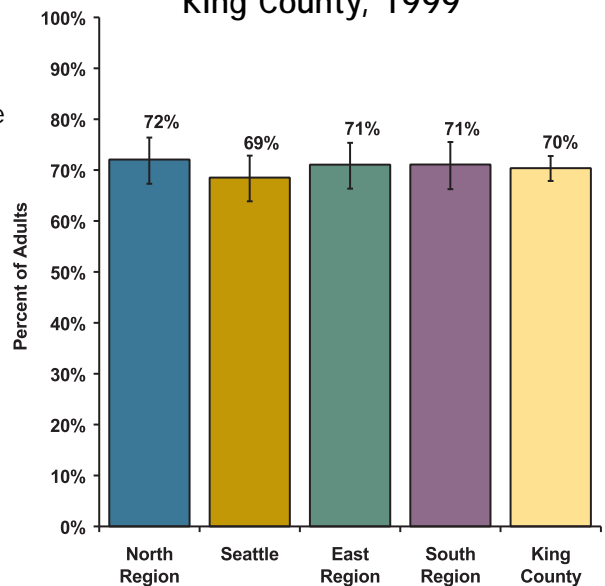
**Percent of Adults Who Are "Very or Somewhat" Active
In Specific Community Organizations
King County, 1999**

| In the past 12 months, how active have you been in:	North Region	Seattle	East Region	South Region	King County
…a neighborhood organization or block club (any type of group that exists for people right in your neighborhood)?	22%	23%	24%	21%	23%
…an organization in the larger community, such as a political group, a civic club such as Rotary or Kiwanis, a youth group such as the Scouts or youth sports, an arts group or others?	42%	41%	41%	36%	39%
…a parent-teacher organization?	23%	21%	24%	27%	24%
…a religious group or congregation?	47%	37%	46%	45%	43%

Percent Adults Who Are "Very or Somewhat" Active in One or More Community Organizations By Education and Gender King County, 1999

EDUCATION

- High School or Less: 63%
- Some College: 69%
- College Graduate: 76%

GENDER

- Males: 67%
- Females: 74%

Percent of Adults (0% – 100%)

- People who have completed college are more involved in community organizations than those with less education.
- Women are more involved than men.

Percent Adults Who Are "Very or Somewhat" Active in One or More Community Organizations By Age and Relationship Status King County, 1999

AGE

- 18-24: 57%
- 25-44: 73%
- 45-64: 74%
- 65+: 64%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

- In a Couple, Married or Unmarried: 74%
- Not in a Couple Relationship: 64%

Percent of Adults (0% – 100%)

- Young adults age 18-24 years are less active than middle age residents.
- People who are part of a couple (either married or not) are more actively involved in community organizations than people who are separated, divorced, widowed, or never married.
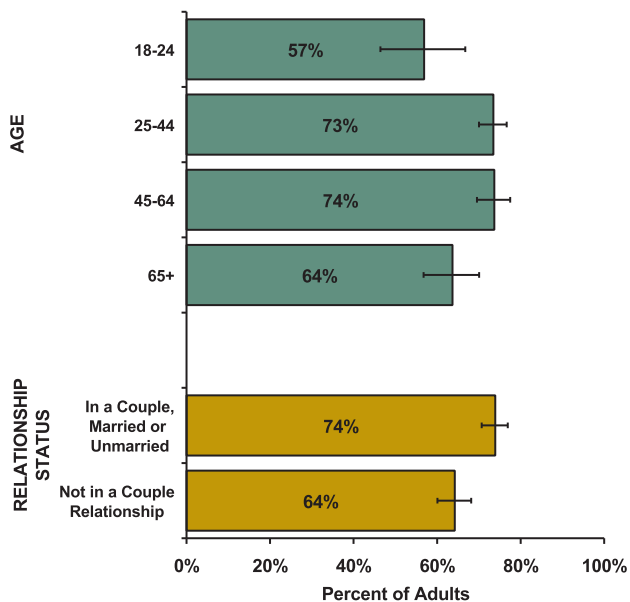
Data Source, Definition, and Limitations

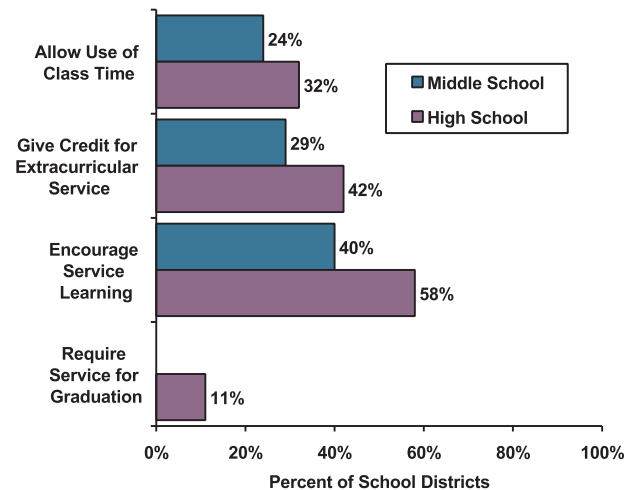The involvement in community organizations measures are from the King County Community Health Survey, 1999.

The limitations of an English-only telephone survey include the following: a) people who do not have a telephone are missed, b) people who do not speak English do not participate, c) people who have less education and lower incomes tend to be underrepresented.
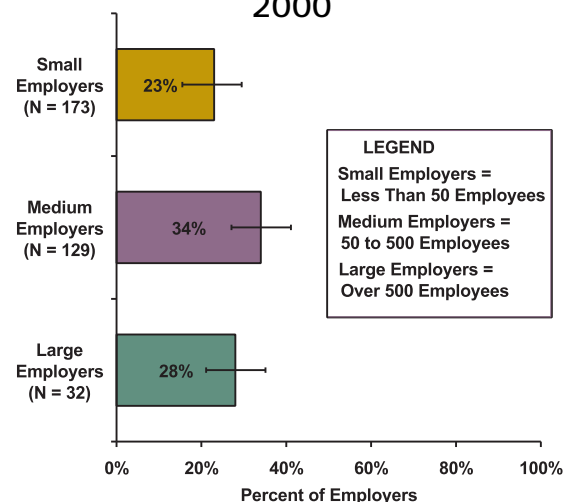
Institutional Support for Community Service

Service to others and to the greater community is something most people value but not everyone participates in. The ethic of service—giving our time and talents for the sake of the common good—is developed within families, and is often reinforced in faith communities, youth organizations and schools. The demands of school and work, however, make it hard to find time for volunteer activities. If schools and employers are able to support service to the community, it is possible that more people, young and old, will participate.

- In a survey of school administrators, less than half of King County public school districts reported that they have practices that support students in community service activities. About one third allow high school students to use class time for service activities. About 40% offer credit when high school students do extracurricular service activities. And only 11% (2 of the 19 districts) require community service for graduation.

- Almost 60% of the districts reported that they encourage their high school teachers to offer service learning opportunities as part of the curriculum.

- The practices of each school district are summarized on the following page.

- Private high schools were also surveyed and less than half (22 out of 53) responded. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of those responding allow students to use class time for service activities, 47% offer credit for service activities, 63% encourage service learning opportunities, and 55% require service for graduation.

- In a survey of King County employers, fewer than 1 out of 3 employers reported that they have a formal policy regarding employee participation in community service.

Percent of King County's 19 School Districts That Encourage Service to the Community 2000

Category	Middle School	High School
Allow Use of Class Time	24%	32%
Give Credit for Extracurricular Service	29%	42%
Encourage Service Learning	40%	58%
Require Service for Graduation		11%

Percent of School Districts

Percent of King County's Employers With A Formal Community Service Policy 2000

Category	Percent
Small Employers (N = 173)	23%
Medium Employers (N = 129)	34%
Large Employers (N = 32)	28%

LEGEND
Small Employers = Less Than 50 Employees
Medium Employers = 50 to 500 Employees
Large Employers = Over 500 Employees

Percent of Employers

Percent of King County Employers With Community Service Policy Who Communicate Policy to Employees and Allow Time Off, 2000
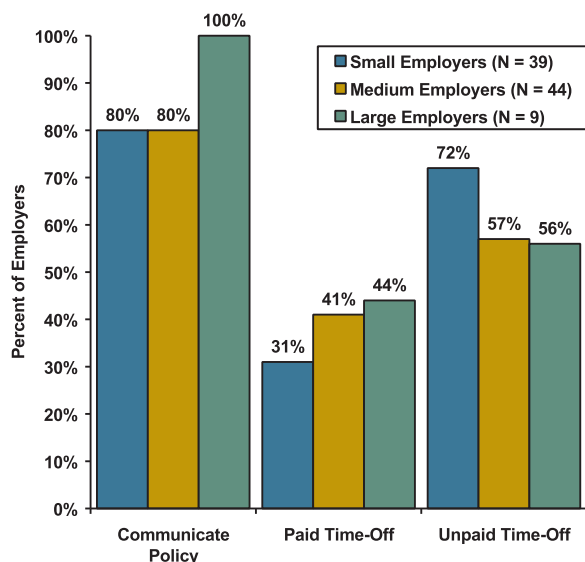
- Most companies with a formal policy communicate their policy to employees; but fewer allow time off, varying by the size of the organization. Only a third to a half allow paid time off and between half and three fourths allow employers to take unpaid time off for community service work.

- Auburn, Renton, and Highline school districts offer more support for their students to participate in community service activities, relative to other districts (Highline's practices vary by school). A few districts appear to have no practices that would encourage service activities.

- Seattle is the only district that requires community service as a requirement for high school graduation.

Policies/Practices of King County's 19 School Districts Regarding Service to the Community, 2000

School District	Allow Use of Class Time		Give Credit for Extracurricular Service		Encourage Service Learning		Require Service for Graduation
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School	High School
Auburn	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Bellevue	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Enumclaw	-	yes	-	yes	no	yes	no
Federal Way	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no
Highline*	yes*	yes*	yes*	yes*	yes*	yes*	no
Issaquah	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Kent	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no
Lake Washington	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no
Mercer Island	no	no	no	no	-	yes	no
Northshore	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	no
Renton	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Riverview	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Seattle	no	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Shoreline*	no	no	-	yes*	-	no	no*
Skykomish	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Snoqualmie Valley	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
Tahoma	-	no	-	no	-	yes	no
Tukwila	no	no	no	no	-	yes	no
Vashon Island	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	no
Total Positive Response	4	6	5	8	6	11	2
Total Responses	17	19	17	19	15	19	19
Percent Positive	24%	32%	29%	42%	40%	58%	11%

* These school districts had some schools give "yes" responses while others gave "no" responses.

Pollution in Neighborhoods

Everyone deserves a clean and healthy environment free from toxic pollutants. In recent years there has been a growing awareness that some communities bear a disproportionate burden of environmental pollution. Without direct measurement, it is difficult to determine the exact levels of pollution. However, the total pounds of toxic substances released into the air by major manufacturing facilities provides an estimate of the pollution burden in different communities.

Air Releases of All Reportable Toxic Chemicals
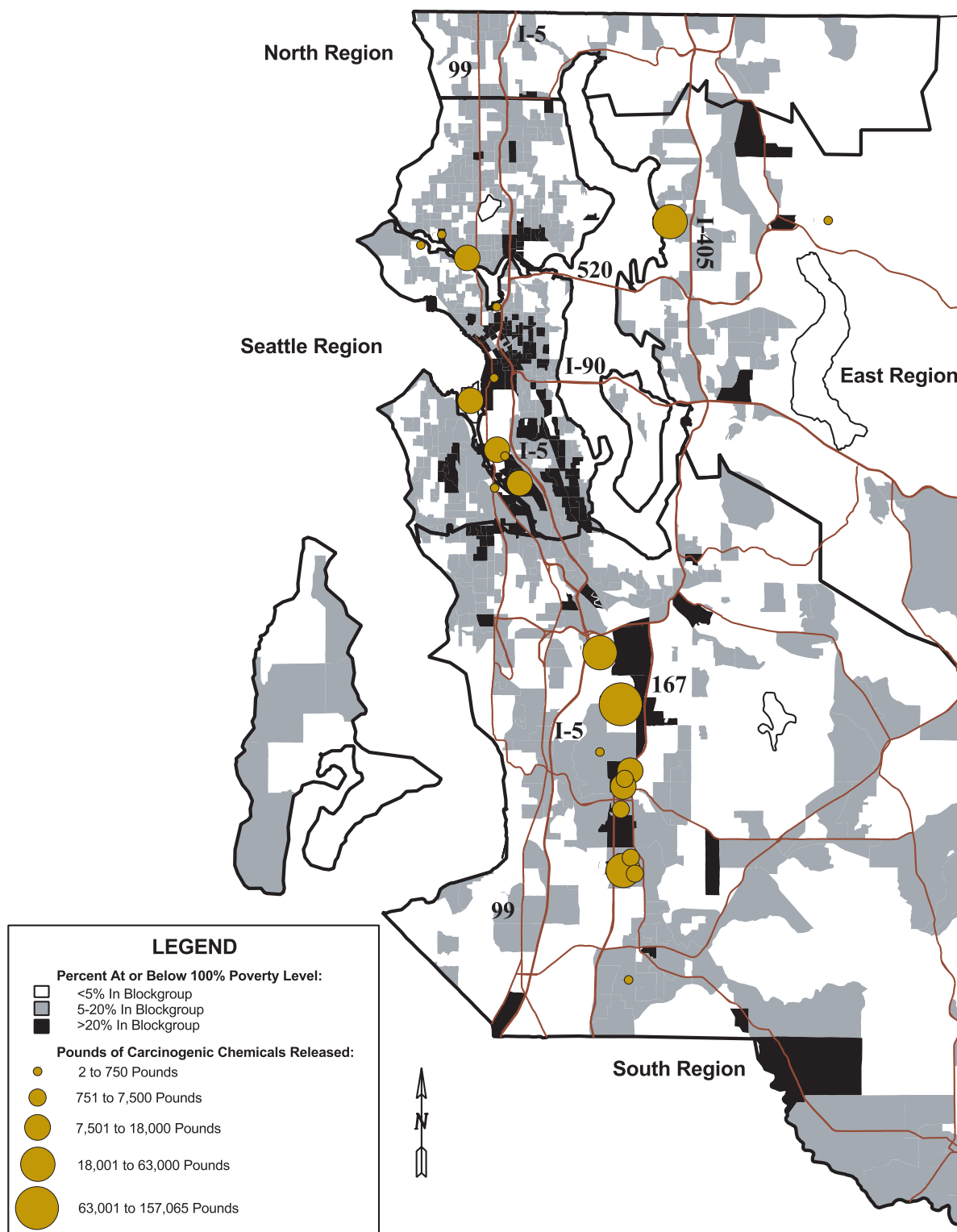### King County, 1997

	Total Pounds Released	Percent of Total Pounds Released	Number of Facilities	Percent of Facilities	Total Population	Percent of Population
North Region	40,000	2%	2	3%	165,605	10%
Seattle	280,000	13%	28	43%	500,644	30%
East Region	350,000	16%	6	9%	368,655	22%
South Region	1,500,000	68%	29	45%	613,621	37%
King County	2,200,000	100%	65	100%	1,648,526	100%

Air Releases of Carcinogenic Chemicals
King County, 1997

	Total Pounds Released	Percent of Total Pounds Released	Number of Facilities	Percent of Facilities	Total Population	Percent of Population
North Region	0	0%	0	0%	165,605	10%
Seattle	50,000	12%	10	43%	500,644	30%
East Region	54,000	13%	2	9%	368,655	22%
South Region	300,000	73%	11	48%	613,621	37%
King County	410,000	100%	23	100%	1,648,526	100%

- The tables above show the total amount of substances of any toxicity, and the total amount of carcinogenic substances, that major manufacturing facilities in King County released to the air in 1997. The totals are broken down by the region where the facilities that release them are located.

- For comparison, the tables also show the relative size of the population in each region. However, no attempt has been made to link facility location with population density, so there is no way to estimate the level of exposure of people living in the different regions. These data are meant to be descriptive only. A more thorough geospatial analysis would be required to determine who is at greatest risk from exposure to toxic air pollution.

- There were a total of 2.2 million pounds of toxic chemicals released into the air by major manufacturing facilities in King County in 1997 alone. Of those, 410,000 pounds were of potentially carcinogenic substances.

- The majority of these facilities are located in either Seattle or South Region.

- 68% of all pounds of toxics released in King County were from facilities in South Region.

- The map on the following page shows the locations of just those facilities that released cancer-causing substances in 1997, as well as the poverty level of all census block-groups in King County. The map suggests that certain areas of South Region and Seattle are much more heavily impacted by air releases of carcinogenic substances than the rest of the county.

Air Releases of Carcinogenic Chemicals, By Poverty Level of Census Blockgroup
King County, 1997

North Region

I-5

99

Seattle Region

520

I-405

I-90

East Region

I-5

167

I-5

99

South Region

LEGEND

Percent At or Below 100% Poverty Level:
- ☐ <5% In Blockgroup
- ▦ 5-20% In Blockgroup
- ■ >20% In Blockgroup

Pounds of Carcinogenic Chemicals Released:
- 2 to 750 Pounds
- 751 to 7,500 Pounds
- 7,501 to 18,000 Pounds
- 18,001 to 63,000 Pounds
- 63,001 to 157,065 Pounds

N

Data Source, Definition, and Limitations

Data on air releases of toxic chemicals are from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 1997 Toxic Release Inventory (TRI). Manufacturing facilities that meet certain criteria must report chemical releases to the environment under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986. The Toxic Release Inventory is a public database containing this information. "Air releases" include both routine and accidental emissions. Carcinogenicity of specific chemicals is determined by EPA. Poverty data are from the 1990 U.S. Census. Although these data are older than the TRI data, it is the most recent year of poverty data by census tract available. The four subregions of King County are defined by aggregating census tracts.

TRI data is limited for several reasons: 1) it relies on self reporting of estimated releases (not direct measurement) by the polluter, 2) only those substances which are on the TRI list of over 600 toxic chemicals must be reported, and 3) it doesn't include toxic releases from smaller businesses (such as dry cleaners and gas stations) or mobile pollution sources, such as motor vehicle traffic.

We have only shown toxic releases to the air because they represent the majority of environmental releases in King County, and are the most likely route of exposure for the surrounding communities. However, because the chemicals released are not uniformly distributed within the census blockgroup or region in which they were released, not everyone living in proximity to the facility is exposed to the same degree. Furthermore, in calculating the total pounds released, we have made no distinction between chemicals of varying toxicity. Some types of releases are more dangerous than others.

Release estimates are only considered reliable to two significant digits, so all figures have been rounded. For this reason, region subtotals may not add up to the King County total.

Ease of Access
To Shops and Services

Easy, quick trips to grocery and drug stores and access to services at health clinics, libraries, senior centers, etc., make people's daily life less stressful. Being able to reach shops and services on foot, bike, or short bus ride may free up time for more important or satisfying activities and help to reduce automobile congestion on freeways and more local highways and streets.

No data have been found to measure this indicator.